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Music in the Community and
Leith Walk Primary School



THE RIME of the ANCIENT MARINER

a retelling for our times

21–23 March 2018, 7pm

The University of Edinburgh
Playfair Library & Old College Quad

Welcome to our retelling of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. We hope you enjoy the performance in this historic place.

We hope you will give some thoughts to the many people who are not warm in their homes tonight. The act of making this kind of production with friends, collaborators, students, and children really captures the essence of what 'community' means.

'Let us tell a different story. Let us remember that the movement of human beings on earth is not new. Human history is a history of movement and mingling. Let us remember that we are not just bones and flesh. We are emotional beings. We all share a desire to be valued, a desire to matter. Let us remember that dignity is as important as food.' UNHCR

With many thanks to all those involved; the children, students, staff, artists and families.

After the show there will be a collection for solidaritynow.org – assisting and supporting those most affected by the economic and humanitarian crisis in Greece.

Dee Isaacs *Artistic Director*

Forward by writer Gerda Stevenson

When composer Dee Isaacs asked me to write an opera libretto based on Coleridge's brilliant epic poem, my feeling was that it would have to be a contemporary retelling. Dee agreed. Today, when a whole boat-load of people die at sea, as they do in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, we are bound to be reminded of the tragic refugee crisis. Dee and I have both worked with asylum seekers and refugees, some risking their lives on terrifyingly dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean. Dee explained our opera was to be a promenade production, beginning in the University of Edinburgh's spectacularly opulent Playfair Library, moving out into the Old Quad, and then back to the Playfair. Coleridge's poem begins and ends with a wedding. Now, in 2018, while refugees are almost daily washed up dead on Europe's beaches, people are planning their weddings on the internet, responding to adverts for 'Weddings on the Med', 'Gorgeous Mediterranean Weddings', with offers to 'Get Married Barefoot on the Beach'.

By the end of Coleridge's poem, the Wedding Guest has become 'a sadder and a wiser man'. He has been taken on a journey, led by the Ancient Mariner. So who will our Mariner be, I wondered? The answer I gave myself was a young man; it's his story that is ancient – as old as time: he is escaping from war. A flawed character, he has survived through opportunism, acting as an agent, receiving cash in return for arranging transport in a leaky vessel for a group of desperate refugees.

Coleridge's text offers no explanation as to why the Mariner shoots the albatross. In his poem, the act remains a mystery. But in a drama, it's helpful to understand a character's psychology. Damaged by the trauma of war, our Mariner has become violent himself. He instantly perceives the peaceful presence of the albatross as a threat and kills it.

I have relished the challenge of reimagining Coleridge's extraordinary characters – the eerie duo Death and Death's Mate, and the Hermit, who saves the Mariner when his ship finally goes down. And it's been particularly thrilling to write for a large cast – a rare opportunity these days, when inadequate production budgets all too often severely limit the scale of production.

Most importantly, it is an honour to be asked to write for a cast which includes so many children and students. Through the University of Edinburgh's wonderful Music in the Community course, these young people are being given the unique opportunity of developing their creative powers, supported by professional artists, through music, literature, movement, set and costume design – the alchemy that is opera.

Gerda Stevenson, March 2018

The Company

The Ancient Mariner Nomaan Khan
The Wedding Guest George Drennan
The Bride Amanda Macleod
The Groom Flynn Le Brocq
The Hermit Gibril Camara
The Boatman Aboubacar Sylla
The Photographer Stuart Jones
Head Chef Joe Fletcher
Head Waiter Graeme Waterhouse
Flower Girl Khalida
Page Boy Aayan

Music in the Community performers

Aileen Erginsoy
Marie Anderson
Michael Paterson
Amber Rose Ness
Ewa Adamiec
Louise Wilson
Nadia Bennett
Heather Phillips
Bex Coffey
Yan Shin Teh
Sarah Thompson
Debbie Snowden
Lizzie Wells
Susannah Mack
Briony Pickford
Erica Cham
Emma Stalker
Joe Fletcher
Stuart Jones
Graeme Waterhouse

Polly Harris
Louise Martin
Christina Bain
Dee Isaacs

P5 – children on the boat

Sorley – *1st child*
Ayza – *Sorley's sister*
Ellie – *2nd child*
Isobel – *3rd child*
Keiran – *4th child*
Vama – *5th child*
Cara – *6th child*
Clara and Faye – *7th & 8th children*
(heavenly twins)
Umama – *9th child*
Prince Raj – *10th child*
Ana
Saif
Eesa
Jessica
Conall
Ben
Faiz
Kacey
Emilian
James
Roberts
Miriam
Seren

P6A – chorus of sommeliers, the chefs, chorus of water snakes

Damilola
Cheshta
Aisha
Agatha
Nepheli
Sibylle
Brooke
Inayah
Jack
Ema
Brian
Jacob
Veera
Khalida
Ayyan
Rafal
Lucciano
David
Kevin
Saif
Liam
Gauri
Alex
Mariama
Tyler
Finn

Music in the Community at the Reid School of Music emerges at an influential meeting point of a number of diverse concerns including: performing arts outreach, community development, creative arts therapies and conflict resolution.

Music in the Community at Edinburgh has produced and created eleven events in landmark sites around the city. What a privilege it is to create another performance in this wonderful setting of the Old College Quad at the University of Edinburgh.

For the past few months Primary 5 and 6 from Leith Walk Primary School have worked with a team of University music students. The performance tonight is a real collaboration and sharing of vision and ideas but it is the children and students who have carried forward that vision with boundless enthusiasm. Thank you one and all.

Please follow us on facebook
facebook.com/MusicInTheCommunity

Biographies

Gerda Stevenson, writer/actor/director/singer/songwriter, works in theatre, television, radio, film, and opera, throughout Britain and abroad. Her poetry, drama and prose have been widely published, staged and broadcast. Literary festival readings include Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Trinidad, Italy, UK and Ireland; nominated as Scots Singer of the Year for the MG Alba Trad Music Awards, following the release of an album of her own songs, *Night Touches Day*, 2014; nominated three times for the Critics Awards for Theatre, Scotland; winner of a BAFTA Best Film Actress award for her role in Margaret Tait's feature film, *Blue Black Permanent*. Her poetry collection *If This were Real* (Smokestack Books, 2013), was published in Italian, *Se Questo fosse Vero*, by Edizioni Ensemble, Rome, 2017. Her second poetry collection, *Quines – Poems in tribute to women of Scotland*, will be published by Luath Press, March, 2018. gerdastevenson.co.uk

Dee Isaacs composer is senior lecturer in Music in the Community at the University of Edinburgh. Dee is passionate about the creation of music and its wider value. For the past 20 years Dee has worked predominantly in the area of Music in

the Community throughout Scotland and internationally. She has been commissioned by a wide range of professional arts bodies including Opera North, London Symphony Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Ballet, Magnetic North, Scottish Ensemble, Live Music Now, The Scottish Executive and Creative Scotland. In 2003 and 2006 she was nominated by the British Academy of Composers for *Festus* and *Suppose Life*. In 2012 she was awarded the Principal's Medal by the University of Edinburgh for her work in music education and within communities both near and far. She studied composition with Professor Nigel Osborne and dedicates this work to him for his continued boundless energy and commitment to those less fortunate than ourselves. deesaacs.com

John Bett director is an award winning actor, writer, director. A founding member of 7:84 in the original production of the *Cheviot*, he directed a revival for Wildcat, *The Silver Darlings*, *Oh What A Lovely War* and *The Jolly Beggars*. Other directing includes a whole raft of shows at Oran Mor plus five written by him. He has written for television, extensively for radio, and has had poems published.

He has co-written seven shows with Dorothy Paul, one of which received a BAFTA Light Entertainment Weel kent for his appearances in *Scotch and Wry*, and he has been in twelve International films. His site-specific work includes *Macbeth* on Inchcolm, *Queen Margaret* in Dunfermline Abbey and a pageant in Aberdeen.

As Polonius, he toured with Shakespeare's Globe in England and Europe, including a performance in the courtyard of Elsinore. His most recent Edinburgh appearance was in *The Jury Play* at the Traverse last October.

Janis Hart set designer has designed for many and varied theatre, dance and opera productions including residencies/associations at Plymouth Theatre Royal, Theatr Powys, Worcester Swan Theatre, London Bubble Theatre co, South Hill Park Art Centre and Derby Playhouse. Freelance work has included companies and spaces all over Britain.

She enjoys interesting collaborations and spaces – which have included an abandoned hospital in Birmingham, the banks of the Water of Leith in Edinburgh, Methil Docks, the Gorbals Rose Garden and many of London's urban and green spaces. Recent credits include *Lady Macbeth: Unsex me here* for Company Chordelia / Solar Bear, winner of this year's Best Live Performance – Sunday Herald Scottish Culture Awards.

Anna Cocciaferro costumer designer has designed costume for previous Music in the Community performances of *Watching*, *Conference of the Birds* and *The Quicken Tree*. She has an interest in educational, interactive costume; other commissions include biological starfish costumes and coral soft sculpture with the Natural History Museum as part of their learning programme. She enjoys engaging the public with physical interaction through such projects; from a tactile under five's sensory mat based on the kitchen garden for Bilston Craft Gallery to *Coming to our Senses*, a fully interactive and accessible exhibition with Craftspace touring.

As an artist in residence in primary and secondary schools she has worked with students to create their own costumed performances with TAG at the Citizens theatre and Build Your Worlds. Community arts projects include costume for the Cultural Olympiad with Stitches in Time and costume for public performance and interaction with Dreadnought, The New Year Games in the National Museum of Scotland. Anna has also worked on textile community projects with Historic Royal Palaces.

Ian Dodds film has worked professionally as a drama and documentary cameraman for over 20 years. He has shot many broadcast documentaries in various

locations around the world most recently in Dubai, Japan, North Iraq, Lebanon, India and Namibia. He has photographed four feature length dramas, *Dummy Jim* is the most recent. The first was *To Xarama* (The Dawn) filmed in Greece, then *Trouble Sleeping* and *Seachd – The Inaccessible Pinnacle* (Gaelic feature) both for the BBC. He has also written and directed four short drama films.

Skye Reynolds choreographer

is a Scottish-based dance artist, performance-maker and educator with more than twenty years' experience working across professional and community arts in the UK and abroad. Passionate and curious about multi-artform communication, her practice is body-based and influenced by the politics of real life. Her recent solo *Pitch* was supported by Creative Scotland and toured in Scotland/ Wales. She is currently developing new work inspired by the ancient Greek poet Sappho. Previous projects include: Janis Claxton Dance, Curious Seed, Jo Fong, Derevo and Khamlane Halsackda. Skye is a co-curator of 'Something Smashing' improvisation events; Engagement Artist with Kings and Festival Theatres Edinburgh; and Associate Artist with Starcatchers. As a previous Dance artist in residence with Dance Base/Imagine her work developed a youth focus and she

has twice been invited to Iran by British Council/Fadj International Festival to co-devise new dance-theatre. Skye teaches at Paris Summer Dance Academy, has worked as Choreographer with Youth Music Theatre UK and was a Performance Captain with Commonwealth Games. She is currently a guest lecturer at Scottish School of Contemporary Dance. Skye has been working with Music in the Community site-specific operas since *The Quicken Tree* in 2011.

Dave House sound is a musician, sound artist and graphic designer based in Edinburgh. His work, which ranges from ambient soundscapes to polyrhythmic experimentation, is composed from field recordings, sampled instruments and voices. He is the founder of The Noisefloor, a versatile sound studio in Leith, and a tutor at Edinburgh College of Art.

Jonnie Clough – BLUE PARROT EVENTS

lighting With Mike Somerville Jonnie designs for a wide range of theatre, music and live events. He has worked with Dee and Music in the Community on several projects including *Memories are made of this* (Old College Quad, Edinburgh University), *Musical Hats* (Scottish Ensemble), *The City Sings* (Grand Gallery, National Museum of Scotland), *Watching* (Royal Botanic Garden), *Postcards from our*

world – (Old College Quad, Edinburgh University), *The Conference of the Birds*, *The Quicken Tree* and *Watching* (RBGE).

Nomaan Khan – The Mariner studied at New College Lanarkshire, earning his BA with Hons in Acting in 2014. He signed to Stiven Christie Management, and has steadily worked ever since. He can be seen on Netflix, in a short role for the show 'Lovesick', while he recently shot and recorded a voice over for the SNP's Party Political Broadcast 2018. Before the casting of *The Rime of the Mariner*, he filmed an episode of Tiger Aspect's *Armchair Detectives*, seen on BBC One. Over the course of the last few years, Nomaan has worked in many forms of media, from roleplay to corporate, and from theatre to television.

George Drennan – The Wedding Guest

has worked extensively in Scottish Theatre starting in 1988 with Wildcat Theatre Company. He has just finished playing King Hector in *Sleeping Beauty* at The Kings, Glasgow.

Last year he spent four months in New York performing *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* with The National Theatre of Scotland. Some other theatre credits include *Lanark* (Citizens Theatre), *STIFF!* and *The Man of La Mancha* (Royal Lyceum), *Sunshine on Leith* (Dundee Rep), *Parahandy* (Eden Court). TV includes:

River City, *Lip Service*, *Still Game*, *Gary Tank Commander*, *Rab.C.Nesbitt*, *Legit*, *Taggart* and was a regular in the Gaelic soap *Machair*.

Amanda MacLeod – The Bride

graduated with a BMus from the University of Edinburgh in 2015 and since then has embarked on a freelance career in the arts. As a Mezzo Soprano, highlights include performances at the BBC Proms, Aberdeen International Youth Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, and in the USA at the Grant Park and Grand Teton Music Festivals.

As an amateur and choral educator, Amanda's work has involved the following stakeholders; Aberdeen International Youth Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, National Youth Choir of Scotland, St Andrew's Voices, Stirling and City of Edinburgh Councils and Renfrewshire Leisure. Future engagements include a return trip to The Gambia with Music in the Community to perform Dee Isaacs' *The Tin Forest* and ongoing work with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Connect Department.

Flynn Le Brocq – The Groom

has been involved as a technician, producer and stage manager on many shows including *The Magic Flute*, *Marriage of Figaro* and *Carmen* (ESO), *Guys and Dolls* (Footlights) and *Jekyll & Hyde*

(EUSOG), as well as performing on stage in *The Mikado* and *Guys and Dolls*. He also worked as part of the production team for the West End hit *Top Hat* and Opera North's *The Makropulos Case*. Flynn is Festival Manager of the Southwell Music Festival and Course Director at Discovery Summer Language School. At university, he is Secretary of E.U. Music Society and in his spare time, a Bachelor of Music Student.

Gibril Camara – *The Hermit*

Director of Alla Leake Percussion follows the line of his father, djembefola Thomas Camara, and grandfather elder Gibril Camara. The Camara Family are from the Susu tribe and are renowned throughout Guinea and Gambia for their traditional musicianship. Alla Leake are a traditional music and dance ensemble living in Gambia and have recently recorded their second album, *Sabuye*. facebook.com/allaleakepercussion
facebook.com/DrummingatAllaLeakeKunda

Aboubacar Sylla – The Boatman is a lead musician in Alla Leake Percussion playing balafon and bote. Many music students have had the wonderful opportunity to visit Alla Leake Kunda to study with the musicians there. We welcome Gibi and Bouba on their first visit to Scotland.

Lucas Chih-Peng Kao – *film*

installation in the Playfair entrance hall is a filmmaker and artist working across photography, movement, video and dance. Born in Taiwan and now based in Edinburgh, Lucas has made short narrative and dance films that have won awards and been screened in film festivals all over the world.

Dee O'Leary *sound* with Roderick

Buchanan-Dunlop
Dee O'Leary is a recent graduate of MSc Sound Design and has continued with the University of Edinburgh as a Graduate Studio Assistant for the Reid school of Music.

Primary 5

We are primary 5. We enjoy learning at Leith walk primary school. Our class is not a class that everyone is the same, we all are different shapes and sizes, gender and colours but no matter what, we love each other. Some of us are confident and others are shy but we all are excited to perform *The Ancient Mariner* FOR YOU! We thank the music students, Dee, the choreographer, the costume designer and the director.

'My name is Sorley. I like football and I am 9 years old. I am playing the part of the the first child.'

'I am Ayza and I am nine. I love to write stories and I started when I was six. I also love to direct and act.

Sorley is my brother in the show.'

'My name is Ellie. I am nine years old and I go to Leith Walk Primary School. I will be playing the second child tonight. I hope you enjoy.'

Primary 6 by Liam

We are primary six. Most pupils in our class are enthusiastic and love trying new things. We all never give up and love playing sports games. We can be silly at times but when it comes to acting mature we always try our best. We are very excited about performing in the show, *The Ancient Mariner*. We are so happy to be a part of the performance. We are all great singers and actors and with the help of the university students our show will be fantastic! The show is amazing and we are proud to have this opportunity.

Thanks to our supporters:

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With thanks:

At Leith Walk Primary

Thank you to teachers and staff for wonderful support during this project. Special thanks to Lucia Portillo – P5 class teacher, Jamie Mc Donald – P6 class teacher, Anne Houlston – head teacher. Hoodie Design – Miriam, P5

Colleagues in the Reid School of Music, University of Edinburgh

Sound – Roderick Buchanan

Dee O'Leary with Kris Marcinkus, Kye Perry, Leo Butt, and Gavin McCabe

Jared De Bruin, Caroline Charlton
Moir Landels, Andrew Queen, Steven Downes, Susan Mc Ginley, Liz Reid, George Tod and his team of servitors, Gwen Orr, Susan Leven

Mike Rutterford
Edinburgh First

Mary Bownes – Vice principal of the University of Edinburgh
Jenny and Anthony Isaacs

From the producer

special thanks to Sarah Hoey – at Edinburgh Global, Andy Catlin for following us with his wonderful photos, Anna Parker for her designs, and the ever-patient Christina Bain!
Joby Burgess – for marimba recordings
National Theatre of Scotland – and Jess Richards

Kevin Mc Guinness – set construction
Alice Knight for design assistance.

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Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing
and rightdoing there is a field.
I'll meet you there.

Rumi

13th century Persian Sunni, Muslim poet, jurist,
Islamic scholar, theologian and Sufi mystic